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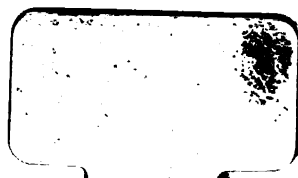
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25
GENERAL VIEW
OF THE
AGRICULTURE
OF THE
ISLE OF MAN,

WITH
OBSERVATIONS ON THE MEANS OF ITS IMPROVEMENT.

BY
MR. BASIL QUAYLE,
~~FARMER~~ AT THE GRIGGAINS, NEAR CASTLETOWN, IN THE ISLE OF MAN.

DRAWN UP FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE
AND INTERNAL IMPROVEMENT.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY C. MACRAE.

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Bt. from Kyle Fletcher

TO THE READER.

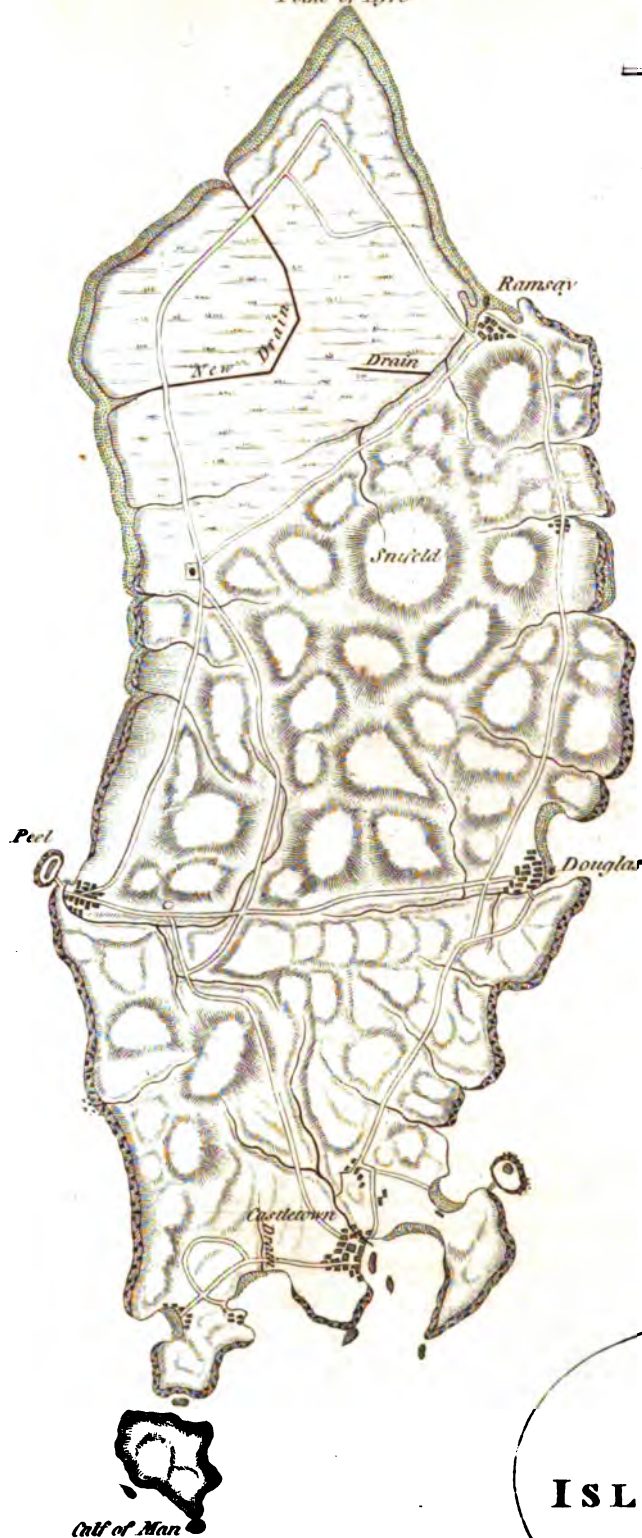
IT is requested that this paper, may be returned to the Board of Agriculture, at its Office in London, with any additional remarks and observations which may occur on the perusal, *written on the margin*, as soon as may be convenient.

It is hardly necessary to add, that this Report is, at present, printed and circulated, for the purpose merely, of procuring farther information respecting the Husbandry of this district, and of enabling every one, to contribute his mite to the improvement of the country.

The Board has adopted the same plan, in regard to all the other districts in the united kingdom ; and will be happy to give every assistance in its power, to any person, who may be desirous of improving his breed of cattle, sheep, &c. or of trying any useful experiment in husbandry.

LONDON, FEB. 1794.

Scale of Miles
1 2 3 4 5 6



THE
ISLE of MAN.

SITUATION AND EXTENT.

THE Isle of Man is nearly centrically situated between Great Britain and Ireland. The middle of the island is in 54 deg. 46 min. north latitude, and is computed to be 32 miles long, and 12 broad in the widest part. Five twelfths are heathy mountains, and moorish ground; and the remainder arable, pasture, and meadow land.

HILLS.

A CHAIN of hills and mountains run nearly the length of the island, and occupy a very considerable part of the center: these are pastured with sheep, colts, and young black cattle, and afford fuel, from the peat mosses, for the greater part of the inhabitants. The right of pasture belongs to the public. The prospect from Snefield or Snowfield, the highest mountain (computed to be 580 yards above the level of the sea) is very extensive; as from thence on a clear day, not alone the whole island, but also the three neighbouring kingdoms, and the principality of Wales, may be distinctly seen.

LOW LANDS.

THE two extremities of the island are of this description, and abound with good arable and pasture land. The south end is composed of many different soils, of which the greater part is loam. Stiff clays, which are difficult to till, prevail in some places, and sand in others. Lime-stone bottom lays under a very considerable tract; the expence of raising it, prevents its being used as a manure so generally as it ought.

Great quantities of sea wrack, or alga marina, are driven ashore by the winter storms, which prove a valuable acquisition to the cultivators of barley within two miles of the shore; it has also been tried for potatoes, and answers extremely well as to quantity, but inferior in quality to what is raised on farm yard dung. This manure is found to be of so volatile a nature, as to be totally expended the second crop. The extremity of the island, to the northward of the mountains, is a plain containing about 48 square miles of valuable improvable land, and mostly consists of a sandy loam, on a bottom of clay or marl; it also contains an extensive moss, which, within these ten years, has been improved by means of a large open drain. Another tract of 500 acres of flat clay is dedicated to hay, and appertains to different estates in the neighbourhood which have no other meadowing.

RIVERS.

RIVERS, or more properly streams, (as none run a course of above six miles, and few above half that distance) are numerous. The four principal streams take their rise in the mountains, and have their exit at the four towns, where they form harbours. In their course they are essentially useful for the several corn and flax mills, and abound with trout and salmon in the season of the year.

CLIMATE.

THE climate is rather milder than in the neighbouring parts of Great Britain and Ireland, particularly in winter, the frost and snow being slight and of short continuance: on the other hand, a disadvantage arises from the want of that heat in
 I .. summer.

summer so friendly to vegetation, which causes late harvests, and of course prevents the grain from arriving at its full size and weight, and reduces the value of the straw for fodder.

Frost and snow seldom appear here before Christmas, and within these few years have been so slight as to be little impediment to cultivation.

The island being much exposed by its situation in the middle of the Channel, suffers much from gales of wind and falls of rain, which are frequent, and of long continuance. In the spring months easterly winds often prevail, and render the seeding of the land more difficult, and less complete; they likewise prove very prejudicial to the tender shoots of corn.

TOWNS AND POPULATION.

THE island is divided into seventeen parishes, and has four towns. Castletown is the chief, and seat of government, situated near the southern extremity; and contains about 500 houses; on an average of five to a family, the number of inhabitants amounts to 2500. In the center of the town stands an old castle, which, although built seven hundred years, is in a high state of preservation; and gives the name to the town.

Douglas is considerably larger, and is the chief place of trade, being the best dry harbour in this part of St. George's Channel; it has 900 houses, and at five to a house, makes the number of inhabitants 4500.

Ramfay has not above 300 houses, and 1500 inhabitants; although an indifferent harbour, it has a good roadstead, where outward bound ships often shelter in gales of westerly wind.

B

Peel

Peel is about the same size as Ramsay, On a small peninsula near it are the ruins of a curious old castle.

In five villages, which contain 200 houses, the numbers amount to 1000, and the rest of the inhabitants residing in the country raises the total population to about 26,000.

YEARLY VALUE AND MANAGEMENT OF ESTATES.

IN the original division of properties in this country, the lands were divided into lots from 50 to 150 acres, very few exceeded 200; consequently the proprietors, who for the most part cultivated their own lands, were nearly on a level. Till within these thirty years, the landed properties altered little in value, for want of a spirit of improvement, which circumstances have now changed; the herring fishery also occupying their attention in the summer season, when the sowing their crops and draining their land should have been their chief employment. This is so far, as yet, an evil to the farmer, although it cannot be denied that it is productive of emolument to the country in general, by the introduction of considerable sums of money in return for that commodity.

Several gentlemen and yeomanry have now paid particular attention to agriculture, and have found it greatly to their interests, both by the additional produce of their estates, as well as by their examples to their tenants, who following an improved mode of cultivation, can afford to pay better rents, and have a greater profit to themselves.

There is still a very considerable tract of land capable of great improvement; but the proprietors are either unable, for

for want of sufficient capital or information; or content with the system inherited from their ancestors, neglect to use those means which would with certainty add considerably to the real value of their lands. Some of them are, however, more attentive to their interests; and by their laudable exertions, a spirit of emulation is rising, and of course the country in general is improving in appearance and real value. On some estates in particular, as complete tillage, and as regular a system of husbandry, is in practice, as can be seen in any place where the nature and situation of the lands are equal. Taking the tythes in kind, which is customary in most of the parishes, is justly considered a grievance, and a great impediment to improvements; many farmers desisting from laying out their money where the most considerable share of the profit rests with those who are subject to no risk, and not any share of the expence. Many estates are, however, clear of this incumbrance, which operates as a tax upon industry; and in lieu have purchased their tythes, or pay an annual modus or prescription, which can never be altered.—A greater blessing could not fall on this country, than an universal payment of the tythes in a settled sum of money.

LEASES.

THE leases generally granted, are for seven, fourteen, or twenty one years. Till the year 1777, leases legally dropt at the death of the inheritor and lessor; but since, inheritors can grant leases for twenty-one years certain, on the most improved rent. Time of entry, at the twelfth of November. Rents usually paid at Christmas and May. The terms, or covenants of leases, bind the occupier to maintain and de-

liver the buildings and fences in tenantable repair, he having received them in the like condition, which is often ascertained by a jury of four understanding men. What buildings he also makes are subject to the same regulations. Restricting the tenants cropping too frequently, is in most leases a particular covenant, allowing three crops of grain in succession, and then either laying the land down with grass seeds, or assisting it by a fallow or fallowing crop. Many, though so bound, make it a rule not to exceed two crops of grain, and find it their interests. Another common agreement is to expend the hay and straw on the farm, as also the manure; in the neighbourhood of the towns, this is often dispensed with, and the farms not injured, as manure is there purchasable.

RENTS.

THE lands in the vicinity of the towns are mostly in the occupation of their inhabitants, whose universal custom is to hold as much as the demands of their families require, and give a greater rent than could be afforded by farmers. Two guineas per acre are given for some grounds; and even more, where a piece of remarkably good land is convenient. Thirty shillings is a common price; but for farms, none, or very few, exceed a guinea. At two miles distance from the towns, the prices are from twelve to eighteen shillings; and the uplands are set from five to twelve. There is a great quantity that does not fetch that rent. No other measure is used here but the English statute acre.

The value of stock employed in agriculture is uncertain and various, as scarcely two farms are alike, or require the same capital. Thirty-five shillings per acre will probably

be the average of most parts of the low, and ten shillings of the uplands. As milk makes a chief part of the subsistence of the inhabitants, a considerable portion of land is allotted for the support of cows; most farms keep six at least, some twelve, but very few as many as twenty. The butter produced from these is mostly exported to England, where it is much in esteem.

DISTRIBUTION OF A CROP, &c. ON A FARM IN THE
NEIGHBOURHOOD OF A TOWN; NUMBER OF ACRES
270; RENT 210l.

	ACRES.
In wheat,	26
Barley,	30
Oats, -	30
Potatoes,	24
Hay from sown grass,	40
Meadow,	10
Flax, -	5
Fallow,	13
Pasture,	92
	<hr/>
	270
	<hr/>

Plough horses,	6
Saddle,	1
Poney, -	1
Stallion,	1
Colts, -	4

Milch

Milch cows,	-	-	-	-	15
Fattening cows and heifers,	-	-	-	-	10
Bull,	-	-	-	-	1
Graffing to fix cows,	-	-	-	-	6
Four horses,	-	-	-	-	4

And twenty sheep.

House servants, two men and three boys; with six labourers and twenty-five additional hands in harvest. Families, seven; and souls, forty. This farm was divided among six tenants, who kept sixteen horses, and maintained thirty souls.

LABOUR.

THE inhabitants of this island are sufficiently numerous for its cultivation; but the herring fishery bringing in so much money, tempts the owners of small farms, tenants, and labourers, to spend the three most important months in the year in that employ. Upwards of five thousand men are engaged in the fishery, who, after having tilled their land and sown their corn, prepare their boats, nets, &c. and leave the weeding of the crops and the saving of their harvests to their wives and families, and those few men who prefer being ashore. This custom is no way prejudicial to those whose crops are small; but is severely felt by the farmers, whose chief dependence is on corn; it frequently happens that corn, both uncut and cut, is much injured for want of sufficient number of hands. The women are expert reapers, and can do many other parts of husbandry work. Threshing is chiefly performed by them, on the upland farms; and in digging up of potatoes, they are little inferior to men.

The lower class of inhabitants live on meal of oats, and barley, and potatoes, and fish, with a small proportion of flesh meat.

meat. Their breakfast is of meal pottage and milk ; their dinner is potatoes, and either salt or fresh fish ; sometimes beef or pork, as they can afford ; and their supper either pottage, or potatoes and milk. What bread they use is made of barley meal, which is cheaper than oat meal, and is considered as more wholesome.

The labourers have a small piece of ground for the growth of potatoes ; and those who keep cows are obliged to cultivate some corn for their provender.

The price of labour is increased within these last ten years, from six-pence to eight-pence per day ; and in some places, as high as a shilling. Many works are found as expensive as in the opposite coasts of England, though the daily wages are lower, occasioned by the want of activity and ingenuity. The customary mode of employ being by the day, and not by the job, is the chief reason of this want of exertion. House servants have also raised their wages, near one half, since the above period. A ploughman is not to be got under six guineas ; when, ten years ago, none required above three and a pair of shoes, or a quarter of a hide for sandals. Boys, from fourteen to seventeen years of age, have two guineas, when formerly they got but one. Some expert intelligent men servants have been procured from Scotland and England, at wages from sixteen to eighteen pounds a year, and have proved valuable acquisitions, by reducing the ancient mode of ploughing to less trouble, and bringing the practice of drilling potatoes and turnips to greater perfection ; by which means more cattle are stall fed, and the markets, in winter, better supplied with provisions.

The wages of mechanics are, carpenters and masons, one shilling and six-pence ; quarriers, one shilling and four-pence per day. Mowers also have one shilling and six-pence, with a quart of strong beer, per day ; they cut only three quarters of an acre. Women earn six-pence per day, at potatoe-setting, hay-making, weeding, and pulling flax ; eight-pence in.

in harvest, and seven-pence when digging potatoes. Five reapers, and one to bind, can cut an acre of middling corn in a day. The practice is, to cut the corn as close to the ground as possible; and the usual number of stooks per acre is between sixty and seventy. Stooks of wheat are never topped, and consist of ten sheaves; but barley and oats have twelve sheaves, and are covered. Mowing corn has been tried by way of experiment; but tying and stooking after mowing, makes it come as expensive as reaping. Shoeing horses is always paid for by the set, at two shillings; their yearly cost is about twelve shillings a horse. Heavy iron work stands in four-pence per pound, and fine work five-pence. The hours of work are from six to six in summer, and if later in the morning are obliged to make it up in the evening, allowing two hours for victuals, and rest at noon; in winter, from eight in the morning to four in the afternoon, without stoppage at noon.

BUILDINGS.

THE farm-houses and offices in this island are, in general, small, and not well constructed, no attention being paid to situating them regularly; but they are built wherever fancy directed. Those lately erected are on a better plan, having the farm offices built round a yard, where young cattle are foddered on the dunghill. The buildings are also larger and more substantial than formerly; the walls built of lime, mortar, and stone; the covering mostly of slates. A common plan here is to have the barn over the cow-houses, but the cattle are never kept so clean, and, if fatting stock, do not thrive so well; it is also inconvenient and expensive to drag in all the crop of corn. Tying the cattle to stakes is still the custom on the small farms; but on the larger, they are secured

secured by yokes, or small uprights, moving in grooved beams. Open stables are too much in use still, the horses being very apt to kick one another.

The cottages occupied by labourers on the upland, are very mean, built of earth and thatched with straw; but near the towns they are better. Thatching with straw, and securing the covering with netting of straw ropes, is particularly well done in this country. The duration of this roofing is short, not lasting above two years; but when the thatch is sewed on, as in England, it lasts fourteen. There are a few estates well supplied with offices and commodious barns.

INCLOSURES.

THE inclosures in this island are usually from four to ten acres, and for the most part, appear to be of ancient date; very many of the fences are unaccountably crooked and irregular.

The mode of fencing, except on a few farms, is by banks built of fods or square spits of earth, to the height of five or six feet, which is a work at which the labourers here are remarkably expert. Ditches for conveying off the water would cause them to be more secure; but the outfides of the hedge requiring so large a portion of the surface, they are little lower than the head land, from which the fods are cut. These fences stand in need of frequent repairs, the cattle and sheep climbing over them, either to eat the grass which grows on the hedge or to get into better pasture. Goss, or furze, where it will thrive, is drilled on the ridge, and makes this mode of fencing very secure; but it must be cut down every two or three years, or it will destroy the hedge. Dry stone walls, where stones can be procured at a low rate, are used, and are considered the best fencing, as they last a long time,

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and are easily repaired. Several new upland inclosures have been fenced this way, and cost from one shilling to one and eight-pence per yard in length, five feet high, and two thick. A few farms have thorn fences, but they only grow on some situations, very rarely with a westerly aspect. A single hedge four feet high, and ditch four feet wide at top, eighteen inches at bottom, and four feet deep, planted with two rows of quick-fets, costs here eight-pence the rod of five yards and a half, and when backed with sod work stands in two-pence more. Plashing and clipping is practised where the thorns are of a sufficient size and age.

ROADS.

THE state of the roads has been rapidly improving within these last twenty years ; before which period they were dangerous in the winter season, and scarcely passable in the summer, for carriages. Travellers generally went on horseback ; even corn, hay, and manure, were carried by the same mode of conveyance. By the attention of the legislature of this island to the due application of the funds allotted to the highways, they are now much altered ; there are, however, many roads very bad, but as there are no turnpikes, the funds are too slender for a general improvement. The committee of the legislature for the direction of the roads, have great merit for the repairs already done, and the new roads they have made and are making, which in many places are difficult and troublesome, on account of the numerous rills and streams running down from the mountains, and the unevenness of the land. The number of bridges necessary in a country abounding with rapid rivulets, causes road-making to be a great expence, and retards so useful an improvement. By the statute of 1776, new high roads

roads were ordered to be eight yards wide, and to have ditches on either side, according to the dryness of the soil, and to be well gravelled on the top; the old roads were also to be made broader where required. The funds originate from parochial labour, including three day's labour from every house in the towns, amounting to about 75*l.* a proportion of the revenue arising from public-house licences, of about 18*l.* and a tax on dogs, of 7*l.* Amounting altogether to 100*l.* per annum.

IMPLEMENTS OF HUSBANDRY.

TILL within these few years, the instruments and geers used in agriculture were few in number, and badly constructed; of course their duration was short, and execution not complete; but of late, ploughs, &c. have been introduced from England and Scotland, which answer the purpose better, and by being more firmly made, and of seasoned timber, prove cheaper in the end.

The Ploughs---used by the small farmers especially, are nearly on the same construction as those formerly in general use in Scotland and Ireland, but not so large or heavy; they do their work on lays or strong lands inferior to no plough; but the draught is greater than those with curved mould boards. The common run of country horses being small, and depending chiefly on the field for subsistence in winter, are not strong, and require four at least to turn a furrow as many inches deep; but where better horses are kept, the two-horse plough is used, and can till considerably more land in the day. A few ploughs of the construction of Mr. Small, of Ford, in Scotland, have been procured, and much esteemed, being more simple, strong, and mathematically made, than those got elsewhere; the draught is also observed

to be less, though the plough is heavier. These ploughs, with their carriage to the island, cost about 2l. 10s. and a country plough cannot be made under 1l. 15s. In the shortest winter days, not more than half an acre is turned up; but more in proportion, as the days lengthen. The two-horse ploughs, without drivers, can do a quarter more work than the long teams.

Harrows—of a good construction are used on most of the lowland farms; but the farmers of the higher grounds, and of little estates, contrive to get over their work with those of the old make, which are small and light, very inadequate to the purpose required, as they must be drawn very often over the land before the seed corn is properly covered. Small harrows cost about eight shillings, and the improved from eighteen to twenty-five.

On some farms the roller is used for smoothing and compressing the barley lands, particularly those where grass seeds are sown, and is esteemed a valuable implement, but seldom tried on lays, except when dressed with compost; it bruises the lumps, and being followed by a brush harrow of the same width, spreads the manure better over the surface of the land. They are generally made of wood, from four to six feet long, and from nine to sixteen inches diameter, and from 500 to 1000 lb. weight; drawn either by one or two horses. There are a few stone rollers of a less size, but equally weighty. A mallet for breaking clods was formerly much in use, but is now only continued on the small farms, and by mechanics occupying patches of land, termed crofts.

Of Drilling and Hoeing Machines—there are few; turnips only requiring machines for seeding in drills; the hoeing, except in one or two farms, being performed with light ploughs, the intervals of two feet betwixt potatoes, beans, turnips, and cabbage, allowing sufficient room.

WHEEL

WHEEL CARRIAGES.

WITHIN these last twenty years the carriages in this island are very much improved, which, with the alteration of the roads, have caused a remarkable difference in the face of the country. Lime and other manure being now portable to the upland farms, in carts, which could only be brought there on horses backs in double baskets made of straw, and in trifling quantities. Sledges and cars of the construction common in Ireland, are now giving place to light single horse carts, called gigs, and large ones drawn by two or three horses; when corn, hay, or any bulky loads are carried, handy rails are connected to the bodies of the carts. Gigs can draw from 500 to 1000lb weight; and of corn, twelve stooks or shocks of sheaves. Carts usually carry from 1500 to 2500lb. and of corn from eighteen to thirty stooks. Gigs with four-feet wheels can be constructed for five pounds; and carts with wheels a foot higher, from eight to twelve; narrow wheels are universally used.

Dressing corn by means of fanners is now the general practice on most farms; formerly corn was kept for weeks in the chaff, before favourable wind and weather afforded an opportunity to winnow, and proved a great inconvenience, both with regard to the cattle's fodder, and sale of the grain, besides being subject to vermin and other means of diminution; it now can be dressed after working hours by the servants, and greatly assist the men employed in threshing: with the the carriage from England, they cost three or four pounds; and with three attendants can clean from eighteen to thirty Winchester bushels in an hour, with passing twice through the machine.

Threshing--has been found the most vexatious work of husbandry; for when the people are employed by the day,
their

their chief endeavour is to do as little as possible, both for the sake of laziness, as well as to insure in-door work in winter, which is a great disappointment to the ploughmen and carters, who by that means are cut out from jobs in wet weather. When threshing is let by the job, it requires particular attention, lest the straw be thrown out half threshed. The usual price by the job, is one shilling per boll of wheat, containing four Winchester bushels. Ten-pence in some places, but generally one shilling per boll of barley of six bushels; and ten-pence for oats, of the same measure as barley.

The expence and waste, attendant on the old mode of threshing, induced one farmer to go to Scotland, and minutely examine the construction of those lately invented machines for threshing; he has erected one which answers the purpose very well, though it does not thresh so much in the day as machines of less size. The draught proves more severe than was calculated, requiring four strong horses at least: when an extraordinary quantity is wished, an additional horse is used. The execution is according to the goodness of the corn. From twenty to thirty stooks of twelve sheaves each, can be managed in one hour, producing from eighteen to twenty-five bushels. The expence of its erection was fifty pounds. Threshing machines, when brought to perfection, appear to be one of the most useful inventions agriculture ever received.

MANURES.

THERE is sufficient manure made in the towns, for the land occupied by their inhabitants, but very little sold to the farmers, whose chief reliance is on farm yard dung. Near the shore of the south end of the island, the farmers receive great assistance from the quantity of wrack, or sea weeds, thrown on shore. This is either used immediately for corn or potatoes,

potatoes, or is a valuable part of a compost, as it impregnates it with strong salts, and preserves its moisture in the driest seasons. Plough oxen, steers, heifers, and dry cattle, consume the oat and barley straw, and usually pay from eighteen shillings to a guinea for their winter keep. The aged cattle are kept in houses, but the young in yards, or in the corners of dry pastures, with liberty of ranging the fields in the day time; the manure made by them is either used for potatoes, or laid by for mixing in a compost either for turnips, wheat, or top dressing lays.

Lime Stone---is to be found in great abundance in quarries and on the shores of the south end of the island. The expence of raising it in the quarries is great, which, added to the advanced price of coals, makes lime an expensive manure: it cannot now be burnt under eighteen-pence per barrel of six bushels, and fifty barrels are reckoned a sufficient dressing for an acre. When used, uncompounded, it is spread on the surface generally two years before the land is broken up, by which time it incorporates with the soil, and produces very good crops. When ploughed soon after spreading, it sinks, and gets out of reach of the plough in a few years; but when used on the top, and not too frequently ploughed, the benefit of liming can be plainly observed for ten or twelve years. Land already spent by tillage feels little good from lime without the assistance of other manures.

On many farms, folding both sheep and neat cattle is still in practice, but not so much as formerly; this, as it is a manure collected in summer, is considered as an acquisition. The cattle must have remarkable good pasture through the day, or they must suffer from so long confinement without eating.

Clay Marl---is in great abundance in the north end of the island, few farms being without it, and many having it in every

every field ; it is mostly found near the surface, and deservedly may be considered the most valuable of manures. The customary way of using it, is to lay from three to four hundred loads, of ten cwt. each, to the acre. After it is dissolved by the winter rains and frosts, the land is ploughed and kept in tillage for a dozen years, and sometimes longer, as the crops continue good. After it is thoroughly exhausted, another dressing of marl brings it round again to as good condition as ever. There are many instances of twelve crops having been procured from one dressing of marl ; it has been tried with success on meadows and pastures, but generally practised on tillage land.

MARKETS AND FAIRS.

EACH town has a market for provisions on Saturdays, where the country people bring their poultry, &c. to sell, and the butchers have their meat provided ; but there is no such thing as a market for grain, the maltsters, millers, and bakers, contracting with the farmers, after harvest is over, for whatever grain they have to sell. As the quantity grown on the marled land of the north end of the island exceeds the consumption there, it is bought up and shipped for England, or for the other parts of the island which are more populous, and do not produce a sufficiency.

The Fairs---for the sale of horses, cattle, and wearing apparel, the manufactures of the island, are numerous, scarcely a week passing without one ; their frequency causes many of them to be ill attended ; there are six at which a good deal of business is done. Between two and three hundred head of oxen and heifers, and a few ponies, are bought up, and sent to England annually. Many of the horses exposed to

sale at the fairs are imported from Ireland, of a larger breed than that of the country ; but they are reckoned neither so hardy or active as the home bred, but by their size are better adapted for the purposes of labour.

LIVE STOCK

THERE is not due attention paid to the rearing of the live stock in this island, either horses or black cattle, trusting to the importation of draught horses from Ireland, from which place young cattle are sometimes brought, the ancient stock of the country being of a small size

The usual number of horses allowed for husbandry, in the low land farms, is one team of two or three horses, from thirteen to fifteen hands high, to thirty acres of tillage. On the upland, and smaller farms, double the number are used, they being of a much less size. Teams of six horses are now rarely seen, though twenty years ago they were the most common. It is yet not unusual for two tenants to join in making a plough team. The prices of four-year olds, and fifteen hands in height, is from twelve to eighteen pounds, and of the small sort from six to ten pounds. Formerly the poneys of this country were remarkable for their beauty, and were much in request in England and Ireland, to run in gentlemen's carriages ; but now their numbers are much diminished, as larger horses are found to be more useful. The importation from Ireland does not promise now to be so great, as the high prices which have been lately got, have tempted many of the farmers to breed for their own use at least, and stallions have been procured from England.

The universal use of milk, for the diet of the inhabitants, causes the stock of horned cattle to be numerous ; but the breed is not taken sufficient care of, rearing indiscriminately

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from all sorts of cows, few of the old country stock can now be found; they were short-legged, and thick bodied, and more remarkable for fattening than for giving a quantity of milk: sixteen quarts per day, for three months after calving, being considered a very good produce, twelve quarts will be near the average return. The milk is of a rich quality, and is always set for cream before churning: twelve quarts of milk producing near two quarts of rich cream, will give one pound of butter of sixteen ounces. A few barrel churns are used on the larger farms, but the plunge churns are the most common. Butter is the chief object, as it meets with ready sale, and the milk an indispensable article in house-keeping. On a few farms, having from twelve to twenty cows, cheese-making is practised. Fresh butter is sold in summer at five-pence per pound, and in winter and spring as high as eight-pence; when salted in crocks, it sells at six-pence and seven-pence. Between 800 and 1000 crocks, containing 30 pounds each, on an average, are annually exported to England.

The cattle of this island are observed to require but a short time to fatten, when either in choice pasture, or exported to England; but the country appears better adapted for rearing of stock than fattening. When fattened, their average weight is four score per quarter, and in proportion to that weight have forty pounds of tallow, and sixty pounds of hide.

Calving cows and heifers sell in the month of May from four to six guineas; dry cows and heifers, for fattening, from 3*l.* 1*5s.* to 5*l.*; oxen from the plough, from five to six guineas, and usually leave with the grazier from 2*l.* 10*s.* to 3*l.* 10*s.*

In October and November, the principal slaughtering months, beef fetches at market two-pence-halfpenny per pound, and gradually rises to four-pence in winter, and through the spring till June, when the earliest grass fed beasts coming in, the price lowers again by degrees.

The Holderness breed has been tried, but is not suited to the climate or grass. Cattle of a larger size than the stock of the island, have been imported from Scotland and Ireland; but on the whole, there are few well made cows, or capital milkers, in this country.

There being a great portion of heathy mountains in this island, a considerable number of sheep are kept; within these twenty years, one-third less than formerly, as the inclosed lands are more appropriated to cropping. Few farmers keep above one hundred, except on the uplands, as they are very difficult to prevent from climbing over the fences, which are in general made of earth. The ancient stock is very small and hardy, enduring the severest weather with little loss; when fatted, their usual weight is from five to eight pounds per quarter, and the meat particularly well tasted. This is still the breed common on the upper farms and mountains. In the lower estates, the sheep, a mixture from Scotland and Ireland, are much larger, weighing, when fatted, from twelve to eighteen pounds. No choice stock of sheep is in the possession of any farmer in the country, and those whose weight would be about twelve pounds per quarter, seem to be the size best adapted to this island. The disorder called the *Rot* is scarcely known, but another prevails, occasioned by eating a particular weed, common in many pastures, called, in the language of the country, *Ouw*. The leaf of this herb destroys the liver, and causes the animal's death in the course of twelve months. On opening the sheep, this leaf is found attached to the liver, and transformed into an animal having apparent life and motion, and retaining its shape as an herb. Two pounds and a half may be the average weight of the smaller sized fleeces, and the larger rarely exceed seven pounds. It is not of the finest or longest staple, but the inhabitants make very strong cloth for their own clothing. As the custom of washing the sheep, previous to shearing, is not in practice, the wool is sold, far from being

clean, from six-pence to eight-pence per pound. Almost every farmer reserves as much wool and flax as employs the female part of his family. There are sheep having wool of a colour thought peculiar to this island; a light brown, called in Manx *Laughton*, similar to the colour of Spanish snuff: these are not accounted hardy, and are more difficult to fatten than the other sorts. The cloth manufactured of their wool, is liked much by the natives, and is the only reason why any of that breed is preserved.

Almost every cottager keeps one or two pigs, which makes their number considerable; they are reared on the offal of the houses, and run about the lanes, and are killed at ten or twelve months old. Potatoes and grains assist their keep in summer, and potatoes, whether boiled or raw, with some little corn, is the food used for fattening. Hams and bacon for the English market prove a great encouragement for this species of stock. The market price for fresh pork is two pence-halfpenny per pound, and for hams and bacon five-pence. The average weight is fifty pounds per quarter.

Poultry is also numerous, not being annoyed by foxes, fowmerts, or other vermin. Fowls fetch at market six-pence a piece, and weigh four pounds at an average. Geese are very common, but are considered disagreeable companions to cattle in pastures: where they can be conveniently reared, they are well attended to; their price is from one shilling to eighteen pence, and weigh six or eight pounds. Turkeys and ducks are also plenty; a considerable quantity of poultry and eggs are sent to England.

TILLAGE.

TILLAGE.

THE arable land is laid out, in general, in inclosures from four to ten acres each. The ridges of various sizes, those of wheat, pease, or oats, are narrow, between four and nine feet wide, and barley from 12 to 20: due attention is not paid generally to drawing them straight, or to regular breadths, except on those farms where the two horse teams have been introduced. High ridges are not at all used, few lands having so deep a soil as to admit of them; but the ridges are alternately cloven and gathered, or more commonly, only cloven at every stirring.

DRAINS.

MOST lands in this country stand in need of this improvement; which is practised with spirit by a few individuals, who have found their account in it. The covered drains are usually two feet nine inches deep, nine inches wide at bottom, and two feet at top; they are filled up, one half with stones, and on them a layer of straw, or pared surface of the sward of grass land, which the labourers here have a particular neat way of paring. This prevents the mould from running down between the stones, which would destroy the effect required. This can be completed, exclusive of the stones and their cartage, for four-pence the rod, of five yards and a half. On stiff lands, hollow drains have been tried without stones, narrow at the bottom, and covered half way up with fods, or square spits of the surface sward resting on ledges cut for that purpose on suitable soils. This is an ingenious and valuable improvement, but it is not proper where the bottom is inclined to sand. The drains or ditches by the sides of the fences, are in most situations too shallow, and not kept
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cleaned ; which causing surface water to lodge during the winter season, chills the land, and robs it of great part of the benefit of the manure laid on, besides protracting the proper seed times. Water furrewing, if more practised, would in a great measure assist in remedying this evil.

A tract of 2000 acres has received immense and valuable benefit from a drain cut through the lowest places, ten feet wide, and six deep ; its length nearly six miles, by which a considerable quantity of arable land, as well as meadow and pasture, has been improved. The soil is peat moss and clay, with abundance of marl.

There are several other large open drains, from low laying meadows and pastures, which have benefitted the proprietors, but require a little more of their attention to keep them clean than they seem to give.

ROTATION OF CROPS.

A REGULAR rotation is little understood or practised, it being almost the universal custom to crop the lands after manuring, as long as they are able to bear corn ; then either to surrender them to grass, or renew them by a fresh dressing. The lands, especially near the towns, complain of this mode, but manure is there at command.

Few farms are so uniformly of the same sort of land, as to admit of a general system of cropping. On good land, the most approved rotation is, first, potatoes or turnips well dunged ; second, barley ; third, clover ; fourth, wheat ; fifth, oats or pease. The clover is sometimes manured according to the condition of the soil or ability of the farmer.

On inferior land wheat is never sown, and oats take its place : the rotation is also shortened, and forced grasses occupy it till the farm can again afford it a dunging. On poor soil, two or three crops of oats are taken off lay land of this description,

scription, and then it is suffered to stock itself with natural grasses, and requires several years before the land is sufficiently covered: it is then surrendered to pasture, till it is supposed it can again bear another course of such like cropping. There are many fields, especially those at a distance from the farm houses, that never have any other course of management. On the marled land of the north end of the island, twelve crops of pease, and barley alternately, are often taken, and sometimes fifteen, without any other assistance than the dressing of marl, or even throwing in grass seeds. But on many farms, crops of sown grass are interspersed, and wheat obtained. If the land gets stiff or foul, a fallow followed by wheat is used. The crops produced from this land are observed to be of a far superior quality to any other, howsoever managed. Heathy land is improved mostly with thorough fallowing and liming, and after a few crops, is sown down with grass seeds; but these soils require frequent dressings and tillage, or they return to their original state. Summer fallowing is not practised by many in this island.

CULTURE OF DIFFERENT CROPS.

Wheat.—THE cultivation of this kind of corn is not general, as barley is found to answer often with more profit to the farmer: the demand for barley being great, and the price good, added to the difference of condition necessary for wheat, prompts the cultivator to make the crop of barley his chief object. Wheat being infected with smut, very frequently injures its sale, and the straw not being fit for fodder, is also against its cultivation.

The seed usually sown is the red sort, and changed from one farm to another, or imported from England or Ireland; after all which it will sometimes be smutty, so that it is evident the fault must lay on the season. It is steeped a few hours

hours before sowing, in salt water, and dusted with lime, which is considered more useful against birds and worms than against smut. It is sown several ways : first, under furrow on a summer fallow, sometimes limed or dunged in September, or October at farthest : second, harrowed under, on clover land, with one ploughing only ; this often produces the cleanest and weightiest corn, but not the greatest quantity : third, which is the most common way, after potatoes ; this crop not being dug up till late in October, often protracts the sowing to Christmas, and frequently prevents the sowing of that grain.

Fair crops are sometimes got after flax, but it is rarely sown after any crops of grain, as the strength necessary for wheat would cause the preceding crop to be too luxuriant. If a stubble is dunged, and a wet season follows, it invariably happens, that the crop spends itself in straw, and is infected with smut. This grain should, however, be more generally grown, as 5000*l.* is annually paid for flour imported. According to the condition of the land, is the allowance of seed, good soils, sown early, being better stocked with plants, with two bushels of seed to the acre, than three bushels sown at Christmas. The return is usually from 24 to 36 bushels per English acre ; and sold always by weight, allowing 64 lb. per bushel ; which is in general heavier than the grain actually weighs, requiring $\frac{1}{7}$ th to make up the due weight. The price is from one guinea to 24 shillings per boll, of four Winchester bushels.

Barley.—The lower class of inhabitants depending on this grain for bread, and the increased demand of the maltsters, makes barley the greatest favourite, and chief dependance of the farmers in this island : more than one half of the arable land is annually sown with it, and it is found to be the best adapted to the soil and climate of any sort of grain except oats, which are hardier and bear with coarser tillage. There are

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but two farts sown, the four rowed, which is only fit to malt; and the two rowed, of which the meal is used for bread.

The four rowed requires the earliest sowing, and is ripe a fortnight before the other, and is maltable as soon as fit to thresh. As it is a small grain, it does not turn out so much meal as the two rowed, which last sort requires land in greater condition, and generally bears the weightiest crop. The usual allowance of seed per acre, is from three bushels and a half to four and a half, and the average return thirty six. The marled land of the north end of the island produces very good crops, and of a remarkable good sample.

On some rich pastures, with only two ploughings, crops of heavy clean grain are sometimes obtained; but it is most commonly sown after potatoes, the necessary manure and tillage of which ensures a mellow rich seed bed, and a favourable return, in case the summer is not attended with much rain. The usual seed time is from the middle of April to the middle of May. This grain is sown after wheat and pease, but never after oats, without the lands being manured, a custom seldom in practice, except where wrack, or sea weed, is to be had, which throws good crops after any kind of corn. After potatoes in beds, it is sown on one ploughing; but after any drilled or corn crops, two or three tilths are always given. The prices have raised within these ten years, from 15 to 18 shillings, and now are as high as a guinea per boll of six bushels. The grain, not weighing its due weight of 56 lb. to the bushel, has created a custom with the maltster of allowing half a bushel to the boll, but the millers mostly buy at three cwt. to the boll.

Oats.—Oats are in general cultivation, especially on the upland farms. As the meal produced from that grain forms a considerable part of the diet of the labouring people, there are many places where oats should be sown instead of barley,

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which would prevent having recourse to the importation of meal, a custom much too frequent. Oats are most commonly sown on a lay, or after other corn, with only one ploughing; sometimes two are given, and the seed turned under furrow: but this is too seldom practised, as the crops from this mode are mostly good. The two sorts of seed are the common white oats, and the Poland. This first is a hardy grain, and not being very liable to shake, is mostly sown. The Poland frequently pays very well, when sown on rich land and well sheltered, but is subject to shake, and does not yield in meal superior to the common sort. The usual seed-time, is from the first of March to the middle of April. From six bushels of seed, a return of 48 is often got; but the average does not exceed five bolls of six bushels to the acre; and the price is from 12 to 14 shillings per boll, according to the weight of the grain.

Beans—are not yet much in cultivation; heavy crops have, however, been raised on some farms; but they are difficult to save, as moist weather attends the latter end of harvest.

Pease.—This grain is not much sown in the south end of the island; but on the light lands of the north it makes a material part of their husbandry. Pease meliorating the soil is a good preparation for their severe barley cropping. The grey and white sorts are both in common use, and are sown in the month of April; the allowance of seed is two bushels and a half to the acre, and the return about twenty bushels.

Rye.---Very little of this grain is at present grown; formerly, before marling was so much used, rye occupied the land now sown with wheat.

Potatoes

Potatoes—are generally, and in considerable quantities, grown in this island, the manure being chiefly appropriated to their cultivation, as they are found particularly useful for the maintenance of the inhabitants, and for the support of different species of stock. There are many different kinds of seed set, and the modes of cultivation various. On rich land, the kidney sort bear an excellent character, but are not so prolific or keep so well as others. The white and apple potatoes are good in quality, and yield a return in proportion to the tillage and manure. These sorts are better than most for the first part of the season. The pink eyes, and copper plates, are hardy and strong, admitting of coarser management. The blacks are a late sort, and keep well till till August, when they are mellow; but before Christmas they are watery.

There are many other sorts cultivated by the townsmen in their crofts, but these are the sorts generally planted throughout the country.

On the upland farms, and on coarse soils, they still adhere to the ancient mode of cultivation, termed lazybed. The land is laid out in butts or beds, from six to ten feet wide, allowing from two to three feet for interval or furrow; the manure is then spread on the surface, and the potatoe cuttings placed at ten inches distance from one another on the dung, and covered with the earth dug out of the interval; when the plants begin to appear above ground, a second covering out of the same interval, of finer mould, is thrown on, which destroys the weeds, and does no injury to the potatoes. These two coverings do not exceed four inches deep over the sets: they are then kept hoed and weeded, till the potatoe blossoms covering the surface, do not allow the weeds to rise again. Another method is, to plough the dung under, allowing an interval for earthing. The furrows are broken and levelled by hacks or mattocks; the sets are then planted with dibbles or sticks; having feet like spades, are

pressed into the land easily to the depth of four inches. After the sets are dropped in, the holes are filled up with rakes : the earthing, hoeing, and weeding, is the same as the lazybed. Another method is, to dig the dung under, as is practised in gardens; set with a dibble, and not to give a covering of mould, but hoe and weed as often as the weeds appear; from 18 to 20 bushels per acre, is the usual allowance of sets: the return depending on the care of hoeing and weeding, is various; from 160 to 200 bushels is about the common return; but sometimes with extraordinary care, 300 bushels have been obtained.

Drilling potatoes is practised on many farms, but it is remarked that the crops are not so great as those grown on beds, though a better opportunity to hoe and weed certainly should plead in favour of that mode. The time of planting, is from the latter end of March to the middle of May, the earliest set producing the most mealy potatoes, but the greatest crops are raised from those planted about the first of May. The digging up is performed with three tined forks, which subject the potatoes to less risk of cutting than spades or ploughs. A good hand can get up eight heaped bushels in a day without the assistance of a picker; 1s. 2d. per bushel is considered a fair price on the field, but the expence of carting and storing increases the price in spring, frequently as high as two shillings. To prevent injury from the frost, it is necessary to cover them carefully with straw, but the safest way of preservation is in heaps in the field, packing straw closely round them about six inches thick, and covering the straw with earth a foot thick at the sides, and two feet at top, observing to build the heaps as sharp as possible, and to place the grass side of the fods to the outides. This, when well beat with the back of a spade, and coped sharply at the top, will effectually keep potatoes from injury of either frost or rain.

Turnips.

Turnips.—This root appears to be well suited to the climate of this island, and very good crops have been raised within these few years on some estates; but the potatoe crop is so great a favourite, that dung cannot be afforded for their cultivation: however, turnips are gradually rising in repute. The seed is always sown in drills well dunged, and wherever they have been cultivated, great attention has been paid to their tillage, manure, and hoeing. The return has in general been profitable, though their cultivation is attended with extraordinary expence. The common winter seed is the sort sown.

Turnip rooted Cabbage, and Starcity Root---have been tried, and found not to answer. Crops of carrots have been also grown both for horses and cows, but were so very expensive to keep clean of weeds in moist summers, that they are now gone into disuse.

Different kinds of winter cabbage have been grown for the feeding of milking stock, and were found very convenient. The manure demanded for the culture of potatoes, is the chief reason why these last mentioned crops do not enter more rapidly into general cultivation.

Flax.---The growth and manufacture of flax is very general throughout the whole island, almost every farmer and cottager growing a little, both for the use of their families and exportation. The linen cloth is particularly well manufactured, and finds a ready sale in England, where 5000l. worth is annually exported: the price from the loom is from one shilling to one and six-pence per yard. The seed is usually sown in April, and kept weeded till it completely covers the land. By the middle or latter end of July, it is pulled and laid in water for a week, by which time the pith is putrified, and will suffer the bark or flax to part easily. It is then spread on a pasture to dry, till it is found by examination, to be fit for scutching or dressing. It is then dressed

at mills erected for that purpose, of which there are many on the different streams, and is then ready for spinning; for cloth of one shilling per yard, it is spun without any other preparation, but heckled when intended for finer. The watering is extremely troublesome and disagreeable, if the weather is wet, a long series of which will ruin the crop.--- It is too precarious to cultivate on a large scale in so moist a climate, but small parcels are easily managed. The allowance of seed is about eighteen gallons per acre, but rarely so much as an acre is sown by any one person. When the season favours, the profit is sometimes as high as five pounds per acre; but it frequently happens, that it scarcely clears itself. Artificial grasses thrive well when sown along with flax, the pulling acting as a partial hoeing. It is always sown on land in good condition, and not after any crop of grain. Potatoes or drilled crops are excellent preparatives for flax.

In consequence of a scheme for boiling flax, instead of watering, recommended in the fifth volume of the Bath Papers, an experiment was tried, but the expence of boiling was greater than the value of the flax.

Hemp is only sown in gardens or very rich spots of land, and very rarely seen cultivated in fields.

ARTIFICIAL GRASSES.

SOWN grasses are now so essentially necessary, that every farm, both upland and lowland, sow grass seeds with their spring crops. The improvement of red clover in particular is great, whether the crop is consumed by grazing or for hay. It is the general opinion, that eating it off with stock, is less injurious to the land than mowing. The roots of clover have a fertilizing effect on the soil, and if the land is well stocked with clover, a plentiful crop of wheat follows.

On account of improving the quality of the hay, ray-grass seed is mostly sown along with the clover. This grass is justly

sidered a great impoverisher, and requires the land to be in good condition, or the crop will be trifling; and the injury to the soil great. White hay seeds are sometimes sown in place of ray-grass, and are accounted better when intended to be laid down for pasture. Ten pounds of red clover, and two bushels of ray-grass seeds, is the usual allowance per acre for a hay crop. For pasture, six pounds of red, two pound of white clover, and four pounds of trefoil seeds, with three bushels of white hay seeds, will form a good sward, if the soil has received its due cultivation, and not exhausted by too many crops, an error too general in this island. The price of well saved hay is from two to three pounds per ton.

CONCLUSION.

UPON a general review of the foregoing subject, it appears, that nothing would contribute more to the improvement of agriculture in the Isle of Man, than a society of the gentlemen of landed property and principal farmers, who by communicating their sentiments, and the result of their experiments, would mutually instruct themselves, and essentially benefit their countrymen, by dispersing their knowledge amongst their tenants, which would naturally create a system of emulation through the whole body of the proprietors of smaller estates, who are by far the majority, and whose means of information are very confined, their practice being for the most part guided by old customs.

A society of that kind, possessing a thorough knowledge of the country, and at the same time having the opportunity of gaining valuable information from the neighbouring kingdoms, seems to bid fairest, as the most essential service that could be rendered to agriculture here.

Draining and fencing appear to have the first claim to attention, and a more regular rotation of crops would be a decided advantage.

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If a fund were established for giving small premiums to tenants and expert servants, whom the society might think deserving, a change for the better would be the consequence with regard to the manual operations of husbandry.

The different species of stock stand much in need of amendment; the advanced price of horses has stimulated the breeding of those of a larger size, but they are not of that broad strong kind which are so proper for labour. A strong breed of about fourteen hands high would agree well with this country, and answer every purpose of agriculture.

The horned cattle, on the lowlands, are not near so good as the land would bear; however, cows of a larger size would not agree with the nature of the soil and climate; care seems to be wanting to rear none but those of the choicest stock.

A method of maintaining the clergy, less unpopular than taking the tythe in kind, would excite the farmers to improve and grow a considerable greater quantity of corn than they now do. It is not uncommon for the clergyman to set the tythe to a tenant, who sublets it to another, and so through three or four hands, who have each a profit. By that means the impropiator, or incumbent, does not receive the real value of the tythe, and the farmer, or cottager, is obliged to give the tenth of all his dependence; a circumstance unavoidably grating and discouraging to the industrious husbandman.

